

The Tables Turned.

A
L E T T E R
TO THE
AUTHOR OF A PAMPHLET,
ENTITLED,
O B S E R V A T I O N S
ON THE
ELECTION OF MEMBERS
FOR THE
BOROUGH OF LUDLOW,
IN THE YEAR, 1780.

By RICHARD HILL, ESQUIRE:
MEMBER FOR THE COUNTY OF SALOP.

The SECOND EDITION, revised, corrected, and enlarged.

A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. — Prov. xviii. 6.

I shall not say that your *Observations* are illiberal, unmanly, and ungenerous, because I agree with you, that cause must be weak indeed that wants abuse for it's defence, and scandal for it's protection. — *Burges's Letter*, p. 54.

S H R E W S B U R Y:

Printed by T. WOOD, and sold for the Benefit of the Prisoners in the County Gaol: Sold also by Mr. EDDOWES, Shrewsbury; Mr. STOCKDALE, Picadilly, London; and to be had of the Newsmen. Price 6d. or 5s. a Dozen to those who buy them to give away. Of whom also may be had, A new Edition of the *Sky-Rocket*, price 1s.

M, DCC, LXXXII.



DEDICATION.

TO

ALL THE WORTHY

F R E E H O L D E R S

OF THE

COUNTY OF *SALOP*:

THE

F O L L O W I N G P A G E S

ARE

M O S T H U M B L Y,

AND

M O S T R E S P E C T F U L L Y

D E D I C A T E D ,

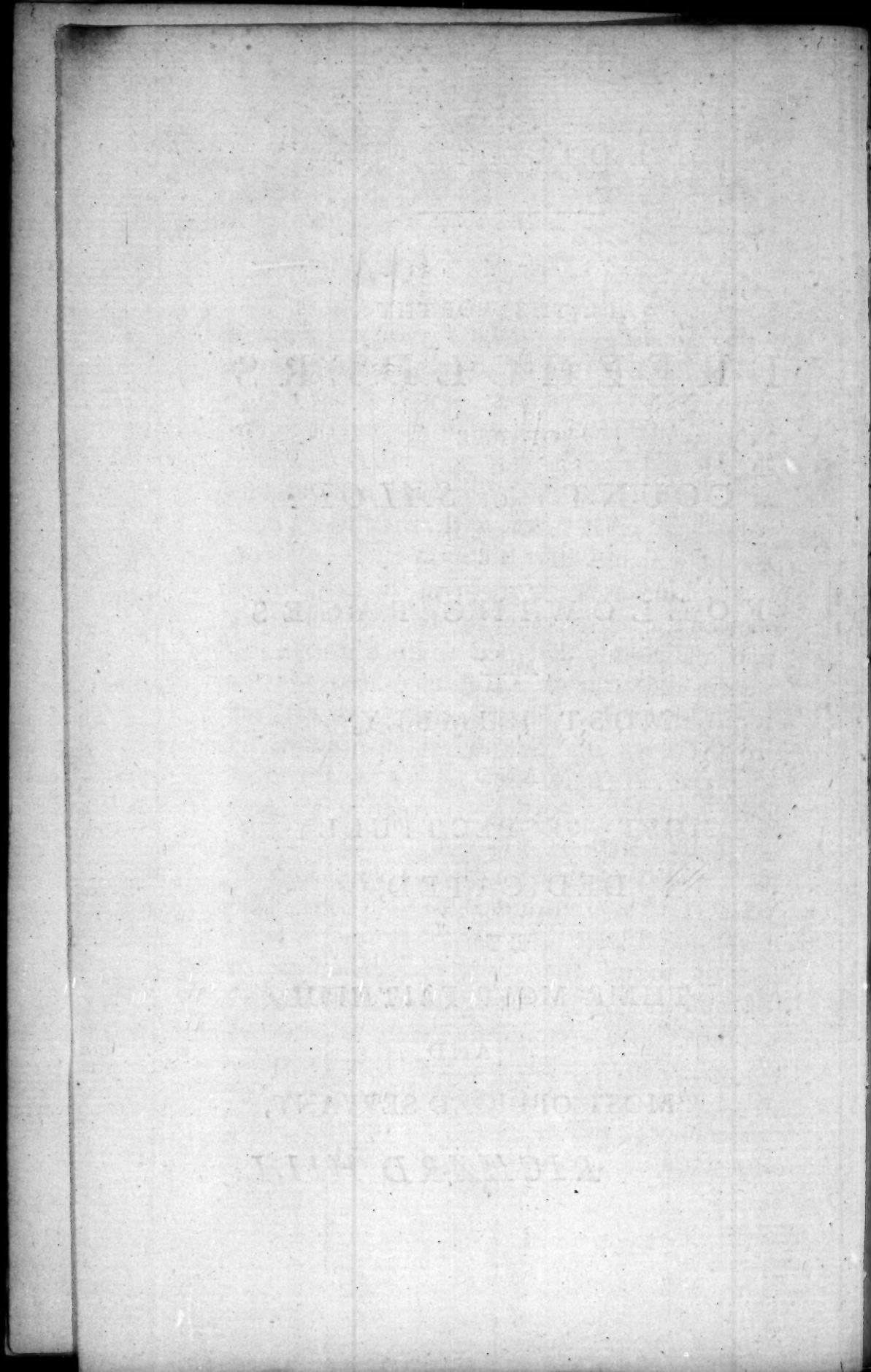
B Y

T H E I R M O S T F A I T H F U L ,

A N D

M O S T O B L I G E D S E R V A N T ,

RICHARD HILL.



A L E T T E R, &c.

Hawkstone, Sept. 2, 1782.

SIR,

AFew days ago, on my return from a journey into the North, I was honor'd with your *Observations*. I gave them a cursory perusal the same evening, and in so doing, found myself very particularly pointed at: I retired to rest, however, fully determined to treat them with that silent contempt which I then thought their just due.

Looking at them again in the morning, I viewed them in another light, *viz.* as evidently and maliciously designed to hurt me in my public character as a Representative of this highly-respected County, and to injure me in the eyes of my own Constituents. I changed my mind with regard to the conduct I ought to pursue. I resolved to give your lucubrations a thorough sifting so far as I was concerned in them; and, looking on myself as summoned to your bar, I determined to plead to your arraignment, leaving it to all the worthy Freeholders of Shropshire (whose thoughts of their Representative you pretend so nicely to discern) to judge between me and my *Observer*, whether what he says be founded on justice, or on malice; and whether, to say the least, my name be not introduced at full length,

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in

in the most aukward and ill-timed manner, and my religious and political character wantonly sported with, as if on purpose to gratify the spleen and resentment of a man, whom I never can have injured in the whole of my conduct, either public, or private.

That I may not misrepresent your words, what follows is taken *verbatim* from your pamphlet, (p. 64,) now lying before me:

“ Dull as the entertainment would certainly be, I had rather hear Mr. Hill speak “ for a full hour by the Shrewsbury clock, “ and mix the venerable name of Christ “ with the low politics of the day, than affect in giving him a successor, who would “ not be content with remaining harmless “ and insignificant in his situation.”

At the bottom of the page stands the following note, with a reference prefixed to my name:

“ It is much to be wished that this gentleman would confine himself to common-place observations, and ill-timed jests in the House of Commons, and not print them for the amusement of the public. Another Sky-rocket, or Cracker, be the explosion ever so gentle, if indiscreetly fired, might demolish the small remains of his political character which are left standing. When a Knight of the Shire tells his Constituents, in print, *that when he rises to speak, he is so embarrassed as to be deprived*

"deprived of his senses, and that if he could suppose that there was nothing but empty benches in the House, he could make a tolerable speech; the Freeholders begin to think that they have got "but a middling, so so kind of representative."

Report tells me, Sir, that you are a Clergyman. I must own this gives me more concern than all you have written; and I cannot help exclaiming,

Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!

Were you to mind *the low politics of the day*, religion might perhaps engage more of your thoughts. As it is, whether the Freeholders of Shropshire do, or do not begin to think they have a middling, so so Representative, there is no doubt but the congregation committed to your care, are thoroughly convinced that they have but a very middling, so so Parson; and dull indeed as the entertainment might be of hearing me speak for a full hour by the Shrewsbury clock, and mix the venerable name of Christ with the low politics of the day, I am bold to say it would be at least as edifying as any discourse of the same length, delivered from the pulpit, by a turbulent, electioneering Priest, in whose thoughts and sermons, that same venerable name had little or no place. But I beg pardon for supposing you ever keep your audience so long in their pews after you have mounted the rof-

trum, as I might naturally enough presume that though you could harangue the multitude for a *full hour* on the business of an election for a borough, yet, when you are called upon to exhort immortal souls to make their heavenly calling and election sure, you think one quarter of the time nearly sufficient for the business.

But it is your opinion, that Christianity and Politics have nothing to do with each other; and it is plain by your book, Reverend Sir, which of these you make your choice, your study, your delight. But you and I differ very widely in our sentiments on this point. So far am I from thinking that Religion and Politics have nothing to do with each other, that I am firmly persuaded they ought never to be separated: and if you will now and then give a little attention to an old-fashioned book called the Bible, you will there find, that true piety is the only sovereign remedy against all that venality, corruption, and ministerial bias, which you so justly censure in your *Observations*.

Let me advise you to read with attention the book of *Judges*, the two books of *Samuel*, the two books of *Kings*, and the two books of *Chronicles*; there you may see, that in proportion as religion was mixed with politics, and the fear of God influenced the councils of princes and rulers, nations and individuals prospered, or came to ruin,

Consult

Consult also the history of your own country: You will there find, that the most powerful struggles which were ever made in favor of the English Constitution against the incroachments of the Crown, were by great and learned men who introduced religion into all their assemblies, and the *venerable name of Christ* into all their debates. This was particularly the case in the reigns of *James*, and *Charles the first*; and if soon afterwards “*religion was turned into rebellion, and faith into faction,*” this was neither to be attributed to religion itself, nor yet to the professors of it, but to the sad decay of the former, by the hypocrisy of too many among the latter.

For my own part, though a warm friend to civil liberty and religious toleration, I profess myself a steady Member of the Church of England, as I am fully persuaded that her doctrines are deduced from the scriptures of truth, and her government and constitution, as pure as may be expected in the present imperfect state of things. And, so long as it shall please God to continue my existence, I trust, I shall never be afraid to confess that *venerable name* before men, which you seem so cordially to wish might have no more place in the great assembly of the nation. And so far am I from regretting the mention I ever have made of it, that I have on the contrary, great cause of shame that I have

have mentioned it so seldom, and so feebly, and that I have been influenced by it so little ; and if it be a crime to avow that I am convinced the awful reason why this once flourishing kingdom is sunk into its present alarming situation, is owing to the almost general contempt and indifference, with which every thing that deserves the name of genuine Christianity is treated, then I must confess myself guilty of that crime, and will further acknowledge, that, till we return as a nation to that God from whom we have so dreadfully departed, we shall go on from bad to worse, till we are gotten to our *ne plus ultra*, unless amazing mercy, or amazing judgments, speedily stop us in our career.

Men may talk what they please of their innate virtue and moral honesty, but one who knew mankind as well as most, had been taught to say by experience, “*That every man had his price.*”* And I firmly believe that nothing but the possession of that *wisdom whose price is above rubies*, and which is *more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold*, can ever keep any man strictly upright in the worst of times, and cause him to forego his own private interests for the good of his country. Upon this account, instead of expressing your indigna-

* An expression of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE.

tion

tion in low sarcastic sneers at the introduction of the religion of the gospel into the House of Commons, it would, certainly, much better become a gentleman of your sacred and honorable profession, to be found lamenting that there is now so little of it within the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel, and to be fervently praying, that there may be an abundant increase of it.

I am well aware, Sir, that it requires much discretion and judgment, *properly* to introduce the subject of religion among the senators of our day. Therefore, tho' I may fail in the execution, I wish to be guided for the best, whenever, or if ever I attempt it. But I believe it will readily be allowed, that, if the serious notes were not to be somewhat intermixed with the *Allegro*, little or no attention would be paid to what was going on. A sense of this, caused a Right Honorable Gentleman to pay your *so so Representative* a compliment, in the public papers printed some time in March last, which he would certainly not have now brought forth to view, were it not to convince the reader, that your *Observations* are not the only rule of judgment, and that they do not all bear so much the stamp of infallibility, as you seem to wish.

The words of the noble Lord are as follow, though for brevity's sake I have curtailed

tailed them a little, without making the least alteration in the sense: But there is still a short sentence at the beginning, which I am certain speaks of me in terms so much beyond my due, that I shall, on no account produce it :

“ Mr. Hill spoke with much wit and good humour, in answer to several preceding speakers; and he is quite right in observing a facetious manner, because, by so doing, he may every now and then catch an opportunity of giving the House a word in season, when he sees them pleased and attentive. A grave and solemn manner is certainly best suited to religious affairs : but the House of Commons, in its present state, would think Mr. Hill favoured too much the enthusiasm of the last century, if he were to lay aside that pleasing variety of manner, of which he seems so eminently possessed. And it is to be hoped, notwithstanding all the jokes and sneers at Mr. Hill’s conduct, that he will be enabled to persevere in the right line of his duty to God and man.”

Permit me now to animadvert a little on that heavy charge, which is to withdraw from me the favourable opinion of all my constituents, or rather (to keep close to the sense of your own expression) has already begun

begin to do so.—However let us again transcribe your own words.

“ When a Knight of the Shire tells his constituents in print, that when he rises to speak, he is so embarrassed as to be deprived of his senses, and that if he could suppose that there was nothing but empty benches in the House, he could make a tolerable speech, the freeholders begin to think that they have got but “ a midling so so kind of representative.”

In the first place here is a most impudent perversion of my words. As they stand in the Sky-Rocket they are as follow :

“ I confess, that when I rise to speak, before that learned and judicious assembly (for I am certain that the body of them are men of solid sense and liberal education) and that though I have hitherto been indulged with a candour and attention which fill me with shame, I am sometimes seized with such a degree of terror and agitation, as causes me to lose my whole chain of ideas, as well as the arrangement of my words, &c. &c.”*

Now, Sir, can you see no difference between being frightened or agitated, and being deprived of one's senses? If not, give me leave to say, that you must certainly be deprived

* *Sky-Rocket*, 2nd Edition, Page 27, Note, to which I refer the candid reader, and where he will also see that there are no such words as “ *tolerable speech*,” &c, to be found.

of your own: but if you do see the difference, then, Sir, if shame ever yet covered your countenance, surely you will blush at being detected in this base fraud; a fraud at once designed to impose on my worthy constituents, and to injure me in their esteem. So that here you smite with a two edged sword indeed.—How much more amiable would you appear, if you were to wield *the sword of the spirit*, and to put on *the breast-plate of truth and righteousness*. But fearing your black designs should be suspected, and that your false quotation should not pass current, you have even dared to mark the words with inverted commas, as if they stood in the *Sky-Rocket*, * just as you have laid them before your readers. That you think inverted commas ought never to be used but when a fair quotation is made, is certain: otherwise why

* As I did not put my name to the *Sky-Rocket*, it certainly was no proof of my *Observer's* politeness, to address me publicly as the author of it. As to the performance itself, if I were anxious for the reputation of it, I could, perhaps, produce such testimonies in its favour, as the *Ludlow Burgess* himself would allow to be truly respectable. But for my own part, tho' I cannot disown the piece, I am far from thinking it without its faults. I am conscious there are some expressions in it which had been better omitted; and that it may with too much truth be said of it.

Sunt quibus in Satira videar nimis acer.

All therefore I shall offer in its behalf, is, that I believe it contains an accurate account of what passed in the House, during the late struggles upon the change of Ministry: though I acknowledge that my chief reason for publishing it was the hope I entertained that the more serious parts of it might be productive of some good.

do

do you ask Lord Clive and Mr. Cornwallis
 " What mean the inverted commas in the
 " first paragraph, which is no quotation* ? "

I shall, however, say no more with regard
 to this fraud, than that a like *forgery*, where
 property had been concerned, would have
 entitled a man to what good old Bishop
 Latimer humorously calls a *Tyburn Tippet*.

Let us now suppose all you can wish, and
 all you have attempted to prove, viz. that I
 really had *told my constituents in print*, that
 when I rise to speak before the House, I feel
*myself so much embarrassed as to be deprived of
 my senses*. Would not common humanity have
 sympathized with me in such a situation,
 when I was endeavouring to serve my coun-
 try in the best manner my poor abilities would
 admit ? And what but the most unfeeling
brutality would have insulted me ? Especially,
 would any thing short of that malice
 which inspires Beelzebub himself, have cau-
 sed any being who calls himself a man, to
 triumph in my distress, and to hold up my
 embarrassment as a crime, for which I de-
 serve to forfeit the favourable opinion of my
 constituents ?—Do, my good Sir, read the
 13th Chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Cor-
 inthians ; there you will at least *see* what
 true charity means, if you never learn to
 practice it.

* *Observations*, page 22.

When an actor has been but a short while on the stage, if he appears so much agitated that he falters in his speech, and even loses the power of expression, the good-natured and polite part of the audience will always treat him with compassion and candor: and none will insult or pelt him, but some of the grim hard-hearted and ill-bred spawn of St. Giles's, from the twelve-penny regions at the top of the house. Far, very far be it from me, Reverend Sir, to suppose that such is the company you associate with, when you make a trip to the capital. But this is certain, that "*birds of a feather will flock together;*" and that we are very apt to catch the manners of those with whom we are most conversant.

But now, after all your attempts to injure me in the eyes of my constituents, for confessing *in print*, that I feel myself *agitated* and *embarrassed whenever I rise to speak before the House*, suppose I had said the very contrary of this, *viz.* "that whenever I rise to speak before that learned and august assembly, I find no distress, agitation, or embarrassment whatever, but can deliver my sentiments as freely and readily as if I were only talking to a particular friend in private." What may I imagine would have been the language of the *observing Ludlow Burgess* on such a declaration? May we not reasonably conclude

clude that it would have run in some such terms as the following ?

“ What a specimen has our new Representative given us of his own importance and self-sufficiency ? What must we think of the man who has not been much above a twelvemonth in Parliament, before he has so totally got rid of his *mauvaise honte*, that he tells the public *in print*, he is an intire stranger to all the delicate feelings of diffidence, fear and embarrassment, when he rises to speak before so able, so learned, so judicious an assembly as the present House of Commons must be allowed to be ? Whatever may have been his professions of integrity and independence, he has given us but a middling *so so* proof of his humility. ’Tis pity but Mr. Hill would learn a little modesty from the great Mr. Addison, who, with abilities so far superior to his own, found himself so much affected when he rose to speak before the House, that he was several times obliged to sit down again. Or as Mr. H. pretends to follow scripture examples, instead of boasting of his effrontery, would it not have become him better to have confessed with Moses, *I am not eloquent, but am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue?* and to have been contented to say of himself as it was said of St. Paul, that *his speech was contemptible?* ”

In

In short, whatever the *Knight of the Shire* had said on the subject, whether it were what he *has told his constituents in print*, or the direct contrary, whether it were any thing or nothing, his *Observer* was determined he should fall under the lash. If a little vein of pleasantly be opened, this is *ill-timed jesting*; if nothing but solemn gravity appears, this would be deemed disgusting, puritanical cant. Thus *John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking*, and the Pharisees affirmed that *he had a devil*. *Christ came both eating and drinking*, and they said *behold a gluttonous man and a wine bibber*. And now, Sir, if I must freely own the truth, I really believe that it is your rivetted enmity against that holy name which you affect to call *venerable*, that has caused you to mount to the top of your *Observatory*, and from thence, like Solomon's *madman*,* to throw your *arrows and firebrands* at me in the unprovoked manner you have done. But let me assure you, Sir, that you are sadly mistaken if you suppose that a hundred such puny assaults will be able to shake me from my steadfastness. On your account indeed, I lament that malicious spirit with which you are actuated; on my own, I have only cause to grieve and fear, lest by indulging too much conformity to *a world which lieth in wickedness*, [*εν τῷ πονηρῷ, in the wicked*

one] I should be tempted to shun the cross of Christ, and to prefer *the honor which cometh from man, to that which cometh from God.*

I believe, Sir, there are not many of my constituents who are strangers to my religious principles ; and I bless God they are such as I am not ashamed to confess before all men, and such as I would not part with for ten thousand worlds ; much less would I exchange them for the empty bubble of my fellow mortals' praise. Whilst I am in the possession of them, I can say, without presumption, because I depend not on my own strength or abilities, that I shall serve my kind constituents with strict uprightness in the honourable station wherein they have placed me ; and it is only so far as I lose sight of them, that I shall ever fall short in my wishes, most faithfully and conscientiously to discharge my duty towards that truly respectable county from which I am delegated. And I am happy to embrace this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to those indulgent freeholders, both clergy and laity, who have honoured me with their support ; and of assuring them that their *middling so so Representative*, has not a *middling so so sense* of the distinguished obligation they have conferred upon him. And though perhaps some few of them may think that I am possessed with certain *odd religious megrims*, and somewhat

tinctured

tinctured with modern enthusiasm, yet I am per-
suaded they believe my intentions to be good,
and my heart honest, and therefore are not
afraid to trust me with their public concerns.
For this favourable opinion I thank them
universally and sincerely ; and can again
venture to assure them, that I will never
barter their confidence for the favors of a
minister, or the smiles of a monarch.—'Tis
true I have not long had the honor of a seat
in parliament, but yet I have sat there long
enough to have my conduct put to the test,
especially as it has been a time of trial ; if
therefore, you can lay your finger on any
one instance of my deserting or neglecting
my duty, either towards the nation in gene-
ral, or towards this county in particular, be
pleased to make me and the world acquaint-
ed with it. If I have not been attentive to
whatever instructions have been sent from
Shropshire to myself and my worthy col-
league, (to whose good judgment and ad-
vice, I own myself, on all occasions, most
particularly indebted;) if the dread of un-
wholesome, stagnated air, and midnight
hours, to which I am so much unaccustom-
ed, has ever induced me to sculk away from
my post, when any great national question
was agitated, tho' frequently indifferent in
my health, then, Sir, you might, most
deservedly, have held my character up to
the

the indignation of my constituents, and have given them the intimations you have done of their bad choice of *a Knight of the Shire.* But, if you have none of these things to lay to my charge, can you, in your cool moments of reflection suppose, that you have acted a manly, much less a gentleman-like, or christian part, in treating me as you have done?

'Tis true, when speaking of the baneful American war; and all it's direful consequences, I never was ashamed to declare that war in general, and *that* war in particular, was the scourge of heaven against a sinful nation, for our contempt of the gospel of Christ; and herein I most certainly *mixed the politics of the day* (whether you call them high or low, 'tis easy to see which they are in your esteem) with the *venerable name* of our Saviour; and if you are of a contrary opinion, and believe that there is no such divine chastisement in the horrors of war, then what can you think of those repeated, yea almost continual denunciations of God by the mouths of his Prophets, that *he will send the sword* upon particular people and kingdoms, for their rebellions against him? Will you tell these holy pen-men with a sneer of contempt, that they mixed too much religion with the *low politics of the day*?

If you advert to the motion I made in the House, for a general thanksgiving-day on ac-

count of the victory obtained by Admiral Rodney, I think it totally needless to offer a word of apology for my conduct on this head.

As a son of peace, especially as an Ambassador of the *Prince of peace*, you might certainly have found much more suitable employment than that of setting all your neighbours together by the ears, and of tearing open those wounds afresh which had been gradually healing for near two years past; or than that of lamenting the *discredit* and *contempt* into which the Races at Ludlow have fallen.

Surely Sir, the business of Domitian when he was catching flies, was far more honourable for a Roman Emperor than these pursuits and these *lamentations* (how different from those of Jeremiah !) are for a minister of the gospel of peace, *who must not strive, but be gentle unto all men*; and who pays the smallest regard to that solemn exhortation given him by the bishop at his ordination, *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to give himself WHOLLY to the office whereunto it hath pleased God to call him; so that as much as in him lieth he will give himself WHOLLY to this one thing, and draw all his cares and studies this way.**

Had you indeed received the same strict injunctions to give up yourself, your time, your talents, to *political* instead of *religious* subjects, and to *draw all your care and studies*

* Ordaining of Priests.

to the business of elections, instead of that of saving souls ; and had the bishop, when he delivered the word of God into your hand, told you, that *profane and vain janglings* were the *one thing needful* for a *watchman and steward of the Lord*, I must do you the justice to allow, that this county, and perhaps no other could have produced the priest or deacon who paid a more devout regard to the episcopal admonition than yourself.

However, if you persist in neglecting the *Apostle's advice of studying to be quiet, and minding your own business*, and if you are still determined to prefer politics to christianity, and electioneering to praying and preaching, then let me advise you to follow the examples of your once reverend brethren, Messrs. *Churchill and Horne*, by throwing off the *prunella*, and compleating the triumvirate. But if you despise this wholesome advice, one more sheet of *Observations* may quite *demolish the small remains of your CLERICAL character which are yet left standing*.

Before we part, accept one word more of friendly council. Lay aside the character of an *Affassin*. There is not a more odious one upon earth. Or if you must stab, do it openly. A dagger concealed under a caslock bears the very worst appearance. Therefore print a new title-page to your *Observations*, with your name annexed to it ; and in

the mean while, let us candidly flatter ourselves that we may be yet mistaken in supposing that all that wrath and clamour, bitterness and reviling, envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness, with which your publication abounds, and from which we are taught to pray “*good Lord deliver us,*” are not the emanations of the pen of a minister of him who was *meek and lowly in heart.*

Now, Sir, you are welcome to call this address another *Sky-Rocket, Cracker, Squib*, or what you will, and you are at liberty to think *the explosion as gentle or as loud as you please.* But I must leave it to the public to judge whether or not it be *indiscreetly fired*, and also whether by charging your own pop-gun too high in order to shoot at your *muddling so so Representative*, it has not burst in your own hand, and burnt your own fingers in so terrible a manner, that whilst you are capering about with the smart, others may follow you *by the smell*; which, considering how greatly you must have been terrified, may be owing to some other *explosion or discharge*, besides that of a little gun-powder. And if this be the case, it will certainly afford much higher *entertainment* to many of your brother burgesses, than you tell us you could find in hearing the *dull Knight of the Shire speak a full hour by the Shrewsbury Clock*; and they will

will be in some degree recompensed for the loss of their *excellent races*, the *decension* of which you seem to lament much more pathetically than you do the decay of national piety and godliness. However, Sir, I advise you to seek for a plaster as soon as you can ; especially, as it is feared you will meet with but few comforters, and that friends and foes will all tell you that you had better have contented yourself with remaining *harmless* and *insignificant*, *in your situation*, and not have *printed* your *ill-timed jests*, and *common place observations* for the *amusement* of the public. Alas ! they will say, for our poor *Ludlow Burgess* ! how has he been preparing a rod for his own back ! But *Quem Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius.*

I have the honor to be,
With all that respect
which is your just due,

SIR,

(Or Reverend Sir,)

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

RICHARD HILL.

P O S T-

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Did not intend taking the least notice of the *Observations*, further than as I myself was made the subject of them: but as there is a paragraph in them which confirms all my ideas of the author of them, both as a divine and a politician, by shewing how entirely the former is absorbed in the latter, and wherein we have his undisguised opinion, how far systems of politics are preferable to systems of religion, I could not help transcribing it at full length.

" In religion, he is justly esteemed a bigot,
 " who thinks his own opinions right, and
 " those of others wrong; because various
 " opinions are there held, of perhaps, equal
 " uncertainty; and because speculative opi-
 " nions are there of inferior consequence, our
 " principal business being to take care that
 " our lives are in the right. But a manly
 " and decisive line of conduct, adopted, after
 " much reflection, on political subjects, and
 " adhered to with firmness, cannot be *bigot-*
 " *ry*; it is *consistency* and *principle*. I am sorry
 " Mr. K. is to learn this."*

Now, Sir, permit me to say that this paragraph breathes the very quintessence of *heathenism*, is a direct contradiction to the

* Observations, &c. Page 14.

scrip-

scriptures of truth, and stands at irreconcilable variance to the eighteenth article of the church of England, to which you have most solemnly subscribed, and wherein you have pronounced all those to be *presumptuous* and *accursed* who hold the very sentiment you have maintained. *Ergo*, by all the rules of logic, what a thunderbolt have you been hurling at your own head !

But, Sir, after having been so long in holy orders, are we to suppose that you are still so much at an *uncertainty* with regard to your own religious opinions, that you know not whether you are right or wrong ? Nay, that it would be absolute bigotry in you, even to *think* your own tenets are founded in truth, and for ought you know to the contrary, may not be at least as erroneous *as those of others* ? What a confession is here from the mouth of a professing teacher of the Gospel of Christ, who is called upon “ to be ready with all “ faithful diligence, to banish and drive away “ all erroneous and strange doctrines, con-“ trary to God’s word”!* But you go much further still ; for you lay it down as a thing taken for granted, that *speculative opinions in religion* are of trifling consequence, and that if a man’s mind *after much reflection*, be but well stored with politics, and firmly settled in those points, and he pursues

* Ordaining of Priests.

a line

a line of conduct agreeable thereto, he shews himself a person of *consistency* and *principle*.— In short, that all contending for religious opinions, is *bigotry*: but political contentions are noble and manly.

And now for the plausible *salvo* which is to make all the rest go down the more easily. You tell us that “speculative opinions are “there (in religion) of inferior consequence, “our principal business being to take care “that our lives are in the right.” No doubt when you put this to paper, you had an eye to those lines of the poet :

“ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
“ His can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

POPE.

There is such a mixture of truth, error, and fallacy in this assertion, that it requires some sifting; and the best way to do this, is by considering that there can be but one rule of right conduct, and that is *the moral law of God*. Before this rule, no man’s life is *strictly right*, because there never lived an individual but has broken this law: therefore an inspired writer declares, that *there is none that doeth good, there is none righteous, no not one*. Now if every deviation from the law be a sin, it is equally certain that every man living is a sinner; and as such, can never be saved, on account of his good life: for,

for, being *guilty*, he stands in need of an atonement, and can be accepted only through faith in a Redeemer. And it is moreover certain, that whosoever attempts to gain the favour of God on account of his own moral conduct, directly militates against the Gospel method of Salvation, and as much as in him lies, *makes the death of Christ of none effect.* For, *if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain.*—Gal. ii. 21. So far then is it from being true, that if our life be (what is called) right, our faith cannot be wrong, that the direct contrary is the case, viz. that if our faith be wrong, our life cannot be right.

After having produced the testimony of St. Paul, I shall not seek for any better authority. If you choose to dispute that authority, the Apostle will be able to defend his own cause. But it must be left to your parishioners to determine, whether you or that Apostle be in the right; or whether Mr. Alexander Pope, who lived and died a *Papist*, or the reformers of our church (who have declared that all works which have not a right principle of faith for their foundation, *are not pleasant and acceptable to God**.) have truth on their side.

The character of a bigot is certainly a most detestable one, yet, permit me to say, that

* Art. 13th.

your definition of a bigot is not at all a just one ; for if every one were a bigot *who thinks his own religious opinions right, and those of others wrong* ; no one can be intirely exempt from the charge but the man who believes *nothing at all* ; and you yourself are reduced to the sad alternative of confessing yourself either a *bigot* or an *infidel* ; whilst the Apostles and Prophets, and all the noble army of martyrs, especially those who were burnt for the protestant cause in Queen Mary's reign must all have been furious bigots indeed.

You conclude with saying that “ *you are sorry Mr. K. (Mr. Knight) has this lesson to learn.* ” I am still more concerned that you ever learned such a lesson at all ; and hope you will try to *unlearn* it as soon as possible ; otherwise, if your own reasoning be just, we shall be under the necessity of putting down the *Ludlow Burgess* either as a thorough paced *unbeliever*, or as a *bigot* of the most gigantic magnitude.

And now, Sir, methinks there is a large field before us, and it may be some time before we shall lay down the pen ; one thing therefore I have to request, which is, that we may lay aside *politics* and confine ourselves wholly to *religion*. This is certainly a very proper study for us both as christians, and doubly proper for you as a divine ; for *no man*

man that warreth (as a soldier of Jesus Christ) entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.

2 Tim. ii. 4. 'Tis highly probable we may differ in several material points of christianity; and if in any one of these you may think me in an error, as a minister of the gospel, it highly becomes you, nay it is your absolute duty to endeavour to set me right; and I assure you, on my part, that so far as your instructions are grounded on the sacred scriptures, I shall attend to them with deference and humility.

Looking over the last Shrewsbury Chronicle, I find myself very particularly obliged to some kind and judicious, but *unknown* friend, for a letter dated from *Shiffnal*, and signed T. B. wherein my character is vindicated from the malicious insinuations of my *observer*. Did I know from what quarter that letter came, the benevolent author should have received my sincere thanks before this time.—I am only apprehensive lest our *Ludlow Burges*s, on account of his being attacked by a pen so much more able than my own, should (if possible) fancy himself of greater consequence than he does already.

My friend, in his vindication, calls my *Observer's* a *wanton attack*, and expresses his surprise that I should be censured for confessing

sing the agitation I experience when I rise to speak before the House of Commons, or that I should be reflected on by *a teacher of the gospel*, for “endeavouring to introduce christianity among a body of such importance to the welfare of this country.” And indeed, as these are the two principal charges brought against me by the *Ludlow Burgess*, it seems pretty clear, (if there be any meaning in his words) that he thinks the grand qualifications for a good member of Parliament, are *much impudence, and no religion.*

But he must permit me to say, that however cordially he may have adopted this sentiment, with regard to me, as *a Knight of the Shire*, I, on my part, entertain the direct contrary opinion concerning the qualifications necessary to make him a good divine; and therefore, instead of *much impudence, and no religion*, I will reverse the words, and wish him HENCEFORTH to have *much religion, and no impudence.*

*Dull Entertainment for the Rev. ******

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